



# NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture  
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## **USDA to Measure Financial Well-Being of Tennessee Farmers**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Beginning this week, representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will visit nearly 400 farms, including dairy farms, in Tennessee, as the agency begins collecting data for the final phase of the 2016 Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS).

ARMS is a joint effort between NASS and USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS). The survey is an annual program that gathers in-depth information on production practices, costs, and financial well-being of American farm families. ARMS targets select commodities on a rotational basis. This year, the survey places additional focus on the conventional and organic dairy sectors, along with corn. The last time ARMS focused on the dairy sector was in 2010 and focused only on the conventional dairy sector. This will be the first time ARMS will include additional focus on the organic dairy production.

"The majority of federal policies and programs for farms are based on ARMS data," said Debra Kenerson, Tennessee State Statistician. "These ARMS Dairy Cost of Production data, to be published by ERS, will directly affect language in the 2018 Farm Bill as it relates to dairy."

The results of the 2016 ARMS will help USDA and other policymakers analyze the impacts of the new Dairy Margin Protection Program, introduced in the Agricultural Act of 2014. With operational costs driving structural changes within the dairy industry, this new program aims to help dairy producers when milk prices drop and feed prices remain high. USDA launched the program in 2015, making the current survey crucial to measuring its initial effects.

All dairy farmers selected to participate in the 2016 ARMS were notified by a mailed postcard. Trained enumerators will now begin making appointments and visiting the participating farms to gather the information through personal interviews. These visits will continue through early April.

Once all the data are in, NASS and ERS will review and analyze the information. NASS plans on publishing summarized data in the *Farm Production Expenditures* report on Aug. 3, 2017. ERS plans on putting out a report focusing on the ARMS dairy data at a later date.

For more information about Tennessee surveys and reports, call Debra Kenerson at (615) 891-0903, or (800) 626-0987, or visit [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/Tennessee/](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Tennessee/).

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